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FLOOR DEBATE

March 4, 2004      LB 72  
                         LR 209

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Preister. Next speaker is Senator Redfield. Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska, members of the body. I share the thoughts of many people who have spoken to the constitution and how we need to be very, very careful about what we include in the constitution. So I am not going to be supporting this bill, for that very reason. But I think that it's important in the discussion that we bring up something that we did last year that no one has even talked about yet, and that is that, in fact, we have given an opportunity to the people of Nebraska to vote on the State Fair. Now how did we do that? Well, we actually did it on line 39 of your income taxes. Senator Vrtiska introduced a bill last year, LB 72 and he gave the people of Nebraska the opportunity to donate to the State Fair. We discussed it for a great deal of time because, in fact, we were concerned about the State Fair having enough money to continue to exist. We were told at that time that they just needed a little more cushion, that they had hired a new director, that they were forming a foundation to raise money, and that, in fact, they just needed a little bit to tide them over and to help them along the way. But we have actually given an opportunity to more people than show up at the ballot booth to vote on whether they want to use their money to support the State Fair, line 79...or line 39, excuse me. And in the discussion when we were debating that bill last year, one of the concerns we had was the cost of the change to the programming and to the forms that would be produced. And the cost of that was \$51,070, in the estimate on the fiscal note. And the Department of Revenue expected that it might bring in \$43,800. It's too early to know because, in fact, people are just now filing their income taxes on the form that includes line 39. And so I think that perhaps that we are ahead of the game here, that we should wait and see, in fact, whether the people of Nebraska, as they file their income taxes by the deadline of April 15, tell us whether, in fact, they support the State Fair. I pass from library to library in the city of Omaha. I work with the summer reading club. And many times, the State Fair has donated admission coupons for children who have read through that program. And many times I'm surprised that more people do